

News Notes

of the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors

Navy flyer turns war objector

Resigns commission

Ensign Richard G. Otto, 23, of Newtown, Pennsylvania, resigned his commission in the United States Navy on May 26 on grounds of conscientious objection to all military duty. He tendered his resignation shortly after he completed pre-flight training and was commissioned.

Otto, raised in a Quaker family in the Philadelphia area, wrote CCCO that his decision to enter the Navy last November was out of respect for an uncle, a West Point graduate and a colonel in the Army, and a youthful deep desire to do something of consequence. "Blinded by all of the possibilities of a glamorous military life and unaware of all the different aspects of my true personality, I entered upon a way of life which I should have realized was entirely wrong, not only for myself, but also incompatible with my Christian heritage."

He reported that for a short period after entering the Navy he felt a pride and a certain sense of duty, but this feeling waned when he began to comprehend what he was training himself to be. "This awakening," wrote Otto, "is not the result of one immediate horror, or sudden flash of truth, but instead goes back into my past. What I feel now cannot be based on my present desire to escape a monster but only on those that have made me see this machine as a monstrous stigma on the needed effort for peace in the world."

"My decision to resign my commission goes back to my sensitivity toward life, novels by Remarque, Hungarian refugees, children laughing, men and women in love, the quiet of early dawn, and a search for a greater power. When I realized that I was learning to be a part of the destruction of some of these important parts of life, I found myself involved in a way of life from which I saw no escape no matter how terribly wrong it seemed."

It was not until some time after he decided to take the CO stand that Otto was informed of Navy regulations pertaining to applications for discharge by commissioned officers. Otto first considered noncombatant duty as an enlisted man, but felt that this was a compromise and that he was still involved in the military. He was advised by a board of officers reviewing his case to submit his resignation, which he promptly did. Pending action

on his application, Richard Otto has been transferred to the Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida. He has not been confined to quarters or even to the base pending application on his discharge. So far no threats of possible courtmartial have been made.

Denied civil service job

Oral Balzer, Fresno, California, recently was denied a federal civil service position on the ground that his release or "discharge" from his two years of alternative draft work did not specify that it was an "honorable" release. Balzer had earlier been granted the civilian CO (I-O) classification by his draft board and had served two years in the Good Samaritan Hospital in Portland Oregon. That his work was more than satisfactory was evidenced by the hospital's offer to hire him as a permanent accountant.

Balzer applied last winter for a position with the U. S. Internal Revenue Service in Fresno and was rated at the top of the list. The government personnel office in San Francisco refused to approve the appointment on the ground that Balzer did not have an "honorable" release from civilian draft duty. The civilian work program under the draft law makes no provisions for either honorable or dishonorable discharges. The law merely states when the CO has satisfactorily completed the required two years of work, his draft board shall issue him a certificate evidencing his satisfactory completion of and release from civilian work. This certificate of release would seem to be the equivalent of an honorable discharge from military duty.

The refusal of the government examiner to accept Balzer's certificate of release as equivalent to an honorable discharge marks the first time this question has been raised, as far as CCCO knows. Other conscientious objectors are employed in the federal civil service with no apparent evidence of discrimination. Some COs perform their civilian work in federal agencies. Many COs fail federal civil service appointment because they are outranked by other candidates who receive extra points for military service and have priority in federal job appointments. COs who have completed civilian work are not accorded extra points for their draft service.

Protest Martin firing

Important questions regarding erosion of basic freedoms of the American Bill of Rights are involved in the recent dismissal of William R. Martin, 21-year-old George Washington University student and member of Friends, according to the Friends Meeting in Washington D.C. These questions were raised by Washington Friends in letters recently sent to every member of the United States Senate and to the 1,000 Quaker Meetings throughout the country.

The letter reviewed the facts of Martin's dismissal from his job in the Senate cloakroom because he signed a letter sent by Washington Young Friends to 22,000 high school students in the area calling to their attention the CO alternatives in the draft law. Martin was asked to resign, but refused to do so. He was discharged without hearing, and all efforts to secure his reinstatement have been unsuccessful. (NEWS NOTES, May-June, 1960).

One important question which Washington Friends say the firing of William Martin poses for the entire Senate and all Americans is "whether the war system is so entrenched in American life that its basic assumptions and operations are above challenge, criticism, and review."

Washington Friends also ask "whether our democracy is so frail that it cannot permit freedom of expression or dissent by ordinary employees of the government. Do citizens not have the right to confront other citizens about the issues of war, survival, and religious conviction?" Finally, Washington Friends ask "whether freedom of religion in the United States is to be limited to merely holding beliefs and not expressing them in public?"

That elusive ingredient

The Hearing Officer stated that although the registrant would signify that he felt war was unchristian, there was not present that elusive but necessary ingredient in his presentation which would indicate that he was against war in any form or that he believed the use of force was always in conflict with his religious training and belief . . . There is no doubt that registrant's religious training and belief in Christian ideals has had influence upon him but that it has resulted not in a religious position conscientiously opposed to participating in war in any form but rather a philosophical and sociological position opposed to war as the means of obtaining peace.

(Quoted from a Department of Justice recommendation that the registrant be denied a CO classification. The government admits the CO is sincere, that he is religious, but finds his opposition to war is based on philosophical or sociological grounds. What eludes us is how the government can make such distinctions!)

Jersey CD objectors fined

Six Drew Seminary and University students were found guilty June 2 in Madison, New Jersey magistrate court of violation of the N. J. civil defense act. Two who answered that they had never before been arrested were given \$15 suspended fines by Magistrate Howe. Three others who refused to answer the question about previous arrests were fined \$15 each.

Ted Olson, Fallsington, Pa., and a member of the Committee for Nonviolent Action, was fined \$60 because he was, in the words of the magistrate, the "arch instigator" of the protest. Magistrate Howe is reported to have stated from the bench that he would ask the University to expel Olson. University officials were reported appalled at the judge's outburst.

The judge, it was reported, lost all sense of decorum and shouted to the defendants that "we don't want your kind here." The judge's outburst was greeted by a chorus of boos from the student-filled courtroom. The students promptly took up a collection in the courtroom to pay the fines. Esther Frankel, Patterson, New Jersey attorney, represented the defendants.

Harrison replaces Tatum

J. Barton Harrison, Philadelphia, was elected CCCO co-chairman, effective September. He will succeed Lyle Tatum who is leaving for Africa in July under appointment with the American Friends Service Committee. Tatum, his wife, and young son, will be living in Salisbury, South Rhodesia.

Harrison, a graduate of Oberlin College, worked for two years with the AFSC work camp program in Mexico and Europe in 1951-52. He completed Penn Law School in 1956. Harrison refused induction as a noncombatant several years ago. He finally was freed of draft evasion charges by the U. S. District Court in Philadelphia which ruled that the local board had no basis in fact for classifying Harrison I-A-O instead of I-O as requested. A second appeal finally resulted in a I-O classification. The new co-chairman is a member of Friends, is married, and the father of one child. He has served on CCCO's Board for three years.

A. J. Muste was reappointed co-chairman and Caleb Foote and Katharine Arnett were reappointed treasurers for the coming year.

As a Christian I was dissuaded from pacifism. As an agnostic now I am inclined back toward it. (A thoughtful quote from a CO.)

Briefly noted

Mrs. Claire Riggs of Austin, Texas was recently granted U. S. citizenship by Federal Judge Ben Wright in San Antonio. The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization upheld Mrs. Riggs objection to combatant duty on grounds of religious training and belief. She took the noncombatant oath. While granting the petition for citizenship the judge said that if he were to follow his own personal opinion he would deny it.

Karl Meyer, was released from jail in Chicago on May 23 after serving one week of a 30 day sentence imposed by Federal Judge Walter J. LaBuy when Meyer continued to distribute handbills inside the Federal building calling upon all to refuse to pay taxes for war and to support *Eroseanna Robinson*, famed tax refuser. Following *Eroseanna Robinson's* release from Alderson, West Virginia, Meyer's court-appointed attorney made a motion for reduction of sentence. The court determined that Karl Meyer was not repentant, did not deserve a reduction of sentence, but released him anyway. Earlier Judge LaBuy had refused to send Meyer to the Federal Bureau of Prison Medical Center at Springfield, Missouri for psychiatric observation as requested by the Department of Justice.

Two more leading universities have dropped compulsory ROTC in favor of voluntary participation. The regents of the University of Wisconsin recently approved a two-year trial program of voluntary ROTC beginning this fall. Rutgers University made the decision in favor of voluntary ROTC in May. Growing opposition to compulsory ROTC is reported from many universities. The trend to voluntary ROTC appears to be in accord with the Department of Defense current policy that compulsory ROTC is no longer necessary.

Arthur Eric Gregory, 20-year-old University of Redlands (California) student, was honorably discharged from the Marine Reserves on Armed Forces Day, May 21. At the age of 17 Gregory signed up for six months active duty and eight years reserve duty with the Marines.

In his application for discharge Gregory stated that he had come to realize "my inability to kill or consciously injure any living being. Also, that I have always felt that following Jesus Christ is inconsistent with the objects of a military way of life." He further added, "I believe it is my duty to announce my convictions, not to remain silent." Gregory, long affiliated with the Baptist church, plans to join the Quaker movement.

174 convicted violaters of the Selective Service Act were released from Federal prison during the fiscal year ending June, 1959, according to the 1959 Annual Report of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Of those released 111 were *Jehovah's* witnesses with average sentences of 22.8 months. Eleven, termed by prison authorities as "religious objectors", had average sentences of 29.2 months. The remaining 52 men, who presumably violated the draft law for other than reasons of conscience, received average sentences of only 19.8 months, almost 10 months less than that metted out to religious objectors.

To the many hundreds of loyal contributors that make possible the continued services of CCCO we express thanks and appreciation. It is seldom that staff have time to write individual thank you notes. And we think our supporters would rather we use the time assisting the conscientious objector.

Leaves Navy, joins protest

Joseph Glynn Jr., 27, of Boston and Somerville, Mass. resigned from the Navy reserves on June 6 and returned his registration card to his draft board. Glynn, a graduate of Boston University, renounced his military status after serving four years as an enlisted sailor followed by three years reservist duty. Glynn made public announcement of his resignation from the Navy and non-cooperation with the draft from New London, Conn. where he is participating in the nonviolent direct action project against the *Polaris* missile-firing submarine.

In a letter addressed to Rear Admiral *Espo*, Glynn stated that he was resigning because he felt called to participate in *Polaris* Action, and could not consistently do so while still a member of the Navy. "I cannot expect peace to be created by the construction of *Polaris* submarines and the hideous threat of massive retaliation. I cannot live with myself and not act on my beliefs. Resignation from the Navy and active opposition to Navy war preparations are the only moral and realistic acts possible for sailors who consult the light of reason and wish to make their religious and humanitarian concerns visible. To refuse to obey the order to pull the trigger for massive retaliation is to be a person, a being of moral dignity and worth, instead of a machine."

The direct action project centering at New London-Groton, Conn. is sponsored by the Committee for Non-violent Action in protest against the Navy plan to launch a fleet of at least 50 *Polaris* submarines. CNVA opposes continued reliance upon arms and urges immediate and total disarmament.

Friends continue CO policy

A statement recently prepared by the American Friends Service Committee reviews AFSC's relationship to the civilian work program under the current draft law. The statement points out that AFSC is not an agency officially approved by Selective Service for the employment of COs performing civilian work under the draft law, even though many COs have performed their civilian work with AFSC. The AFSC policy of not seeking SSS approval for the employment of COs was adopted by Board action in 1952.

The Committee's policy is based largely upon its experience in World War II that in administering the civilian public service camps it was in effect helping to administer the draft law. Approval by Selective Service for the employment of COs also implies the right of Selective Service to reject some aspects of AFSC work as not suitable for CO service. The Service Committee will not permit Selective Service nor any other organization to exercise such control over internal AFSC decisions involving policy and personnel.

Even though AFSC is not an approved agency well over 100 COs have performed their civilian work with AFSC since 1953. COs serving overseas with AFSC or in Mexico have not had trouble securing Selective Service approval. Currently, California, Illinois, and Pennsylvania State Selective offices refuse to approve CO work assignments with AFSC in their respective states.

While the AFSC has no program established especially for COs to perform civilian work it is happy to accept COs as members of its staff to do work that is part of its on going program. A CO who receives an appointment with AFSC must secure draft board approval for the assignment. AFSC, in keeping with its policy, will not enter into these negotiations.

All men desire peace, but not all men will do that which belongs to peace. — Thomas a Kempis

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The court reporter

Prosecutions

(None since last issue)

Released from prison

5-21-60 William A. Kariakin (Good time)

Currently imprisoned

Allenwood, Pa.—Levi L. Hershberger, Eli J. Miller, Jacob Weaver Nolt

Danbury, Conn.—William W. Hart Jr.

Milan, Mich.—Joe S. Bonntraeger

Sandstone, Minn.—Robert E. McGrath

Tallahassee, Fla.—Hubert Dexine Sprinkle

(Total number of COs convicted of Selective Service violations since 1948 to date, 353. This is a minimum number; Jehoavah's witnesses and Muslims are not included, and we miss a few.)

A manifesto

I will not accept orders to kill. I will not witness to murder. I will not accept the philosophy of expediency. I will not employ deceit. I will not furnish money to buy engines of destruction and murder. I will not accept the last judgement of mere man. I will not become a robot for the warfare state. I will not dissect the heart of one sick guinea pig, nor bleed the soul of one orphan. I will not incinerate the world. I will not forget my brothers who are starving throughout the world and who are being fed only radiation and bullets . . . I will not be forced to love the sin and hate the sinner. I will die first. (From Robert E. McGrath's *The "No" Manifesto* written by Robert E. McGrath and distributed from the Federal court house steps in Cedar Rapids, Iowa where McGrath was sentenced in May to one year in prison for refusing to accept military induction.)

